

## *Partners In Your Pet's Health*

Clear and open communication between you and your veterinarian is the key to a long and healthy life for your pet. A strong partnership in preventative animal health care is a good place to begin this valuable working relationship.

Make a point to share your concerns with your veterinarian should a problem arise. You may be able to solve the problem before it is necessary to seek outside assistance.

If the problem persists with your veterinarian, you can contact:

California Veterinary Medical Board  
1420 Howe Avenue, Suite 6  
Sacramento, California 95825  
(916) 263-2610  
(866) 229-0170 (Toll Free)  
Email: [vmb@dca.ca.gov](mailto:vmb@dca.ca.gov)

*The VMB has no authority over financial disputes. Financial disputes may be settled in small claims court.*

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for up-to-date information

# Sharing the Responsibility of Your Pet's Health

California Veterinary Medical Board  
Registered Veterinary Technician Committee

# FUNDAMENTALS OF VETERINARY MEDICAL CARE

## *You can expect your veterinarian to:*

- Provide competent, humane care using current methods of practice.
- Maintain a clean and sanitary clinic or hospital.
- In easily understood terms, provide a diagnosis, explain a treatment plan and any alternatives that may be available.
- Clearly explain the results of any diagnostic tests.
- Explain your responsibilities for home treatment and follow-up care.
- Provide a realistic timetable for results.
- Verbally review the estimated costs of treatment (written estimates are not required by law, but are strongly recommended).
- Dispense proper care for animals while they are staying with the veterinarian.
- Inform you if there will be no personnel at the clinic or hospital anytime an animal is left overnight at the veterinary facility.

## *Your role as a responsible and caring pet owner requires that you:*

- Carefully observe and report changes in the appearance and actions of your animal.
- Inform your veterinarian of your animal's medical history, including any over the counter drugs being administered.
- Discuss with your veterinarian the degree of your personal and financial commitment in treating your animal.
- Openly review any doubts you may have about your veterinarian's diagnosis and treatment plan.
- Pursue a second opinion to resolve serious doubts in diagnosis or treatment.
- Carefully and completely follow all prescribed treatments and ask questions if something is confusing or unclear.
- Have realistic expectations about what veterinary medicine can do.
- Pay your medical bills promptly and adhere to any agreed upon payment schedule.

## *Veterinary Medicine Today*

The modern veterinarian is a health care professional educated in and licensed to deal with animal health problems.

Scientific advances in animal medicine and surgery have paralleled those in human medicine.

To gain the maximum benefit for your animal from modern veterinary practice, you should become a knowledgeable consumer, a careful observer of your animals, and clearly communicate your health care goals for your pets.

## *The Law*

Q. Who can treat an animal?

A. Only a licensed veterinarian may diagnose, provide a prognosis, prescribe or perform surgery for your animals. Under veterinary supervision, Registered Veterinary Technicians (RVTs) may perform certain prescribed procedures and Unregistered Assistants (UAs) may perform some procedures not restricted to veterinarians or RVTs. (Business and Professions Code, Sections 4825 through 4827)

Q. What about payment of services?

A. There is a Lien Law, which allows a veterinarian to refuse to release an animal until services are paid for. Boarding charges may be added for the time an animal is held under this law.